

**MOT Webinar Series:
Strategies for Managing Anxiety as a Caregiver**

Key Resource List:

NCTSN Parent/Caregiver Guide:

https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/outbreak_factsheet_1.pdf

Psychology Tools: Living with Worry and Anxiety:

https://www.psychologytools.com/assets/covid-19/guide_to_living_with_worry_and_anxiety_amidst_global_uncertainty_en-gb.pdf

Anxiety Canada: Balancing Public Health and Mental Health:

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/covid19-balancing-public-health-and-mental-health/>

Top Tips for Managing Stress & Anxiety:

- Recognize fear, anxiety, stress, panic normal reactions to stressful situation such as COVID-19, plus added stress of being a parent to an immunocompromised child
- **Rely on a few key reputable news sources, but set limits**
 - Keep updated by getting info from few credible media sources, local public health authorities (e.g., BC CDC, WHO), and MOT team.
 - Understandable to feel need to keep checking news or social media for updates, but may trigger fear and panic.
 - Internet news often sensational, may spread rumours
 - Focus on social media that promotes positive community, encouragement versus spreading fear/misinformation
 - Limit time exposed to worry triggers (e.g., watch news once per day at set time, check social media only twice per day)
- **Build structure/routine into day**
 - With changes in employment, childcare, structure of work/school week may have disappeared
 - Losing structure/routine can cause added stress
 - If possible, keep regular wakeup time, bedtime, mealtimes, getting dressed/ready in morning, exercise, build breaks into day
 - Make time for family activities that have helped you feel better in other stressful times (e.g., watching movies, listening to music, playing games, participating in cultural or religious activities online)
- **Stay mentally and physically active**
 - Try something new (recipe, book, project, online yoga with your child...)
 - Aim for 30 minutes physical activity daily
 - Get exposure to natural light and fresh air

- **Find new ways to connect and communicate**
 - We are social animals!
 - Keep in contact with friends and family
 - Facetime chat or coffee date with friend; “virtual” game or dinner night with another family
 - Do something nice for another person (however small)

- **Understanding and managing worry**
 - Natural to feel worried. Can feel like chain of thoughts/images that connect, go in increasingly scary and unlikely directions, plus body symptoms (e.g., muscle tension, aches and pains, restlessness, trouble concentrating, trouble sleeping, feeling fatigued)
 - Worry can be helpful or unhelpful. Helpful worries are about actual problems that need solutions right now. Very real concerns about COVID-19 – helpful solutions like hand hygiene, making sure we have enough groceries, social distancing; unhelpful worries are hypothetical, worst-case scenario thoughts.
 - Practice labeling “real problem” worries or “hypothetical” worries. For hypothetical, try to let the worry go and focus on something else.
 - Try scheduling “worry time” (e.g., 30 mins at end of each day)

- **Self care and coping**
 - Decrease expectations on yourself to meet current reality, focus on what you can accomplish
 - Give yourself small breaks
 - Shift priorities to focus on things you enjoy, things that bring a sense of achievement, and things that help you feel close/connected to others
 - Speak to yourself with compassion (i.e., what would you say to a friend?)